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RELATION OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS TO THE AMERICAN BOY AND TO TRADE INSTRUCTION.

In the *Century Magazine* for May, 1893, occurred these words, inspired by the late Colonel Auchmuty, the head of a large New York trade school: "The American boy has no rights which organized labor is bound to respect. He is denied instruction as an apprentice, and, if he be taught his trade in a trade school, he is refused admission to nearly all trade-unions, and is boycotted if he attempts to work as a non-union man. The questions of his character and skill enter into the matter only to discriminate against him. All the trade-unions of the country are controlled by foreigners, who comprise a great majority of their members. While they refuse admission to the born American boy, they admit all foreign applicants with little or no regard to their training or skill."

These words express a widespread belief that our labor organizations strenuously object to trade instruction, and that the reason for it is that these organizations are controlled and mostly composed of foreign born, who are hostile to the American boy. Before determining the amount of truth in the first charge, with which this paper is especially concerned, it is worth while to devote a few words to the second charge as to the composition of our trade-unions and their attitude toward the American born and those of American parentage.

The two historians of our early labor movement, Mr. George E. McNeil, of Boston, and Professor R. T. Ely, hold that the founders of most of our earliest labor organizations before 1860 were of native stock. Since then, our immigrants have entered the hard-handed industries more largely than have the native Americans. Still more largely

have they entered the labor organizations of their trades in many, but not all, occupations. In Illinois, in 1886, according to the report that year of the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics, only thirty-two per cent of the 89,221 then in labor organizations were of American birth, while seventeen per cent were of Irish, twenty-seven per cent of German, nine per cent of British, and nine per cent of Scandinavian birth, while the percentages in 1880 of the various nationalities among the 333,942 in Illinois engaged in the manufacturing, mechanical and mining industries, trade and transportation, were: Americans, sixty per cent; Irish, seven per cent; Germans, sixteen per cent; British, six per cent, and Scandinavians, four per cent. The proportion of Americans had doubtless somewhat decreased by 1886. If all employers and their clerks could be excluded, the proportion of wage-earners of American birth in 1886, would doubtless still have somewhat, but not very much, exceeded the proportion of foreigners in the unions. Four-fifths of all those in the railroad organizations and one-half of those in the unions of cigar makers, iron moulders, gas and steam fitters, printers and pressmen were of American birth.

Most of our trade-unions have so little prejudice against any nationality, native or foreign, that they keep no records of the number of each in their membership. A number of unions, however, have given me estimates. Mr. Fruaseth, secretary of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, writes that the percentage of foreign born in his union is ninety-five, and on the Atlantic coast less, perhaps fifty, while among the seamen in foreign-going vessels, who are entirely unorganized, the percentage is fully ninety-five. Of the lake seamen outside and in the union, fully seventy-five per cent are foreign born.

In the Bakers' Union, the foreign born predominate, and in the Confectioners' Union, the native. Ninety per cent of the Spring Knife Makers' Protective Union are native American. About two-thirds of the International Furniture

Workers and of the International Trade Association of Hat Finishers; thirty-five per cent of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, and forty per cent of the carriage and wagon workers are of foreign birth.

President G. P. Monroe, of the Stationary Engineers, says, only fifteen per cent of his union are foreign born, which, he thinks, "smaller than in the trade outside." About one-half of the brass workers in the union and in the trade outside are reported as foreign born. About eighty per cent of the silk ribbon weavers in the trade and apparently in the union are of foreign birth. About one-sixth in the Barbers' Union are of foreign birth, and a larger proportion of these outside. Of the Boiler Makers' and Iron Ship Builders' Union, about one-half are reported as of foreign birth, but the president writes: "Nationality cuts no figure. The most intelligent are most in favor of organization."

Mr. F. P. Sargent writes of the Firemen's Brotherhood, what is equally true of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers: "Our organization is almost entirely composed of American born persons."

President Martin Fox, of the Iron Moulders' Union, writes: "The question of ascertaining the percentage of native and foreign in the organization has never been entered into, as the union knows no politics, creed or nationality. The qualifications for membership are based on the ability and workmanship of the applicant to perform the work and command the wages paid average workmen, but, as a matter of fact, the native born predominate. Many of them, no doubt, are of parents born in foreign countries."

That such restriction of apprentices as exists in some unions is disconnected with any race prejudices, may be indicated by the case of the Tackmakers' Protective Union with only about 300 members in six locals, ninety-five per cent being of American birth. This union, dating from 1854, and one of its locals, perhaps the oldest of existing local unions, from 1820, voted in 1890 to take no apprentices

for the next five years, save sons of members, unless by vote of the union. The secretary naïvely writes that his union has never opposed the formation of trusts among employers in his trade, and the men earn \$125 to \$225 a month, and sometimes work only forty hours a week.

While the foreign born are in the majority in many of the hard-handed industries, this is not because of our labor organizations, but often in spite of their efforts, of late increasing, to prevent by restricting immigration this form of competition of those with a lower standard of living. Where the American born are not in our unions, it is either because the American boy does not like manual labor, and so is not engaged in the trades in which there are unions, or else he refuses to join the union of his trade. Many unions write that the Germans take most readily to labor organization, while in Chicago, the native farmers' boys from the Atlantic seaboard States are least responsive. An intense, self-sufficient individualism, which was more fitted to our earlier history, where organization of capital was also little developed, than to the present era of the corporation and the trust, keeps a large, but of late, decreasing percentage of the American boys actually in our trades from joining the unions of those trades.*

* In the Illinois Labor Bureau Report for 1886, pp. 228-29, appear some excellent observations on this subject, in part as follows: "There is both the distaste of the American youth for the trades, and their further indisposition to identify themselves permanently with any class or with any sphere in life. The foreign workman has the traditions of many generations and the walls of caste to restrain him within certain limits as to his occupation; he has no possibilities beyond a given sphere, and is trained and developed within it. Thus environed, his career and ambitions lie in the paths his fathers have trod, and his associations with his fellow-craftsmen make the trade-union his natural and necessary place. Transported to this country, he brings his feeling for the union and his class associations with him as a habit.

"But the American mechanic's boy is born to no condition in life from which he may not rise, or hope to rise, or which at least he may not abandon for better or worse. All the precepts of the schools and teachings of observation suggest other ways of making a living, or at least other avenues in life than those of his father. Add to this the time and toil required to learn a trade, and the frequent objections to his being admitted to the shops, the encroachments of machinery upon intelligent skill in all the industries, the lack of technical training in the public schools,

An extreme instance of a skilled trade monopolized by the foreign born is that of the better kinds of tailoring. One of the most expert workmen among the tailors of Chicago tells me that he has never known but one American at work among the better grades of tailoring. But this is due to the fact that a journeyman tailor cannot afford to take a helper unless that helper has first learned how to sew. But opportunity for so learning is not afforded in this country. In Germany, such preliminary training is afforded in numerous so-called back-shops connected with tailoring establishments, but which do not exist to any great extent in America. Here work is largely done by the journeyman in his room.

A few years ago a trade school was established by the merchant tailors in New York for teaching the tailoring trade. The first year the school had forty pupils. The boys were paid a proportion of the value of their product. Then the system was changed, and the boys were charged tuition. The bright boys dropped out and procured situations as cash boys, errand boys, etc., and were replaced by merchant tailors' sons and proteges or friends, who never intended to be journeymen, but desired to gain a smattering of practical work to qualify them to become cutters or masters. The school dwindled to ten pupils during its fourth and last year. Indifference on the part of merchant tailors and the preference of American boys for positions as civil engineers, physicians, electricians, and the like, rather than tailors, are said in letters to me by its managers to have been more responsible for failure than any hostility or indifference of the Journeymen Tailors' Union.

Mr. M. H. Madden, president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor thus writes me: "You ask, are foreign born workmen received into the unions with less inquiry as to the

and it is not difficult to understand why the American-bred youth seek clerkships and swell the ranks of non-producers, who live by their wits rather than by manual industry, nor why four-fifths of 49,604 mechanics and artisans in Illinois are of foreign antecedents and habits."

length of their training than is true of American born. The answer to this must be in the negative, and it must be delivered with emphasis. The modern trade-union in America is in its infancy as compared with the trade-unions of the old world. Seven years is the time required to serve as an apprentice in the old world. Five years is the limit in this country. Compensation is a feature here. Over there the apprentice receives nothing, and frequently pays for the privilege. As regards competency, the foreign born journeyman is thoroughly grounded in many particulars. I wish to direct your attention to this feature especially. I am a native of Illinois and for thirty years have been a close observer and student of these matters. Therefore I cannot be accused of prejudice in behalf of the foreigner. Instead of his being discriminated in favor of, he is rather legislated against by our societies principally in the way of appealing to prejudice."

If the trade-union is not opposed to the American born in general, is it opposed to the latter learning a trade? This is often charged because of rules in some unions that limit the number of apprentices to be employed at any one time in a union workshop. Have such rules really limited trade instruction? Rather have they tended in most cases, where enforced, to prevent a horde of half-trained boys, with less wants than the average married wage-earner from being used by the more unscrupulous employers to beat down wages. There is, however, immensely less actual restriction of those really desirous of an apprenticeship than is commonly supposed.

Even if our trade-unions did materially restrict competition by well-equipped men by depriving them of the opportunity of learning a trade, the example of many employers might be cited as a justification of such action. Trusts and combinations to restrict competition are the order of the day. In the convention, in 1892, of the National Association of Builders of the United States, John Byrns, of New

York City, declared:* “In the city of New York no consumer can go into a supply house and buy a pound of lead, and I think that that same system exists throughout the country. We deem this necessary for the protection of our interests. If a consumer could go to a supply man and obtain goods as low as we can and cheaper sometimes, when our bills should go to the consumer it would put us in the light of extortionists.” C. W. Gindele, of Chicago,† declared: “‘The Stone Cutters’ Association have a distinct understanding with the Quarrymen’s Association that every foot of dimension stock that is sold in Cook County must be sold direct to the stone cutters.”

In a recent article, Mr. George C. Sikes, has shown by a reference to the declarations of large employers themselves‡ that neither in Boston, Rochester, New York, nor Chicago in the building trades do the large builders, who are able to train apprentices, take as many such as the union rules allow or as they would like, while the inferior small employers would, if allowed, flood the market with cheap, half-trained youths. Prominent builders in the above cities state that the unions do not stand in the way of as many gaining thorough trade instruction as present facilities and self-interest among competent employers permit.

The semi-annual report of the British Trade-Union of Lithographic Printers, in September, 1889, thus clearly and sensibly expresses the laborers’ view:§ “We believe in technical education, if the object sought to be attained is to improve the skill, efficiency and touch of workmen and apprentices, who may be permanently engaged in certain industries, that is, for those engaged in the printing trade to receive further instruction in printing in the technical school; those employed in lithographic printing to receive

* Proceedings of Convention, p. 70.

† *Ibid.*, p. 78.

‡ *Journal of Political Economy*, June, 1894.

§ Fourth Report on Trade-Unions of British Department of Labor Statistics, pp. 613-14.

lessons in lithography; and those engaged in other trades to receive practical instruction in respect to those trades. But to throw the classes open for individuals engaged in one industry to receive practical lessons from practical teachers engaged in another industry will be to defeat the object sought to be attained, and will be mainly prolific in introducing or manufacturing workmen far less skilled than those of to-day. It will appeal to the intelligence of any man that, unless this restriction be observed, dire results must follow.

“We would place no obstacle in the way of the development of technical education. We wish it every success. But we must ask our members, several of whom are teaching in technical schools in different parts of the country, that only those who are engaged in the trade, either as journeymen or apprentices, shall receive instruction in connection with it.

“The system of to-day by which apprentices are but taught a portion or certain branch of their trade is in itself bad enough, and produces a number of workmen not properly skilled, and these are the individuals who would be much benefited by receiving instruction at the schools. But to give instruction in lithography to any who may apply for it, and who are not members of the trade, would be to act diametrically opposite to the objects ostensibly sought to be attained.”

The writer of this paper made a personal investigation of this matter in 1891, embodying the results in a paper which appeared in the proceedings of the American Social Science Association for that year. Of the sixty to seventy trade-unions in the United States then having a national or international organization, forty-eight with a membership of over five hundred thousand made returns to the writer. Most of the other unions are small and known to place no restrictions on apprentices. Now of these forty-eight unions, twenty-eight embracing 222,000 members, or forty-five per cent of the above 500,000

had no restrictions upon apprenticeship; in ten unions with 197,000 members, or thirty-nine per cent of all, restriction was left to the locals. Nearly all of these 197,000 were carpenters, printers, cigar makers, painters and decorators. No returns were received from most of the building trades aside from the carpenters, but it is known that where they have any restrictions upon apprenticeship, they are usually a matter of local regulation. Let us examine a little the restrictions in these unions. Only those branches of the cigar makers' organization which make the better grade of cigars attempt any restriction at all of apprentices. Where restriction is attempted, it is usual to allow one apprentice to a shop and two apprentices where from five to ten journeymen are employed. The term of apprenticeship being three years, and the natural working life of cigar makers over fifteen years, there is, in the application of this rule, opportunity for a considerable yearly increase in the number of cigar makers. It may be a sufficient evidence that the cigar makers do not unduly restrict the number of apprentices if I state that the Chicago union, with a membership of 1900, has between 700 and 800 apprentices.

Of the eleven local typographical unions in New York State investigated in 1886 by the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, eight reported some restriction of apprentices. The very moderate rule common to most of these was one apprentice to four or five journeymen, the term of learning being four years. But such rules are of comparatively little avail in keeping down the number of apprentices because of the large number trained in the country newspaper offices, where, in the absence of unions, no rules are applied. All of the eleven unions, as stated in the report, admitted to their membership on equal terms with any others, those boys who had learned their trades in non-union establishments. The Chicago Typographical Union allows one apprentice (in newspaper and two in job offices) to the first ten journeymen and one apprentice to every five journeymen thereafter.

A veteran printer of the union has found this rule would allow for the 1700 membership of one of the Chicago unions about 250 apprentices, but the number employed is only about 140, very clearly proving that not as many boys desire to be apprentices in the printing trade by nearly one-half as the union rules would allow.

In view of the common belief that the building trades are successful in limiting the number of apprentices, it is very significant to note the fact brought out in the Massachusetts census for 1885, that in none of the building trades was there one-half, and in most cases not one-fourth, as many apprentices as the union rules would allow. Among the blacksmiths there was one apprentice only to twenty-eight journeymen; among the carpenters, one to sixty-two; among the machinists, one to twenty; among the masons, one to one hundred and five; among the painters, one to eighty-nine; among the plumbers, one to forty-four; among the printers, one to nineteen; among the tinsmiths, one to sixteen. In Wisconsin, in 1889, according to the fourth biennial report of the Commissioner of Labor and the industrial statistics of that State, there was only one apprentice to every thirteen among the masons; one to every twelve among the carpenters; one to every twelve and a half among the painters, while there were three apprentices to every four journeymen among the plumbers.

Two of the most exclusive unions in this country are the 'Tile Layers' and the 'Flint Glass Workers'. The former with a small membership requires a learner to serve two years as an apprentice, and then he must be able to secure a two years' contract as a laborer at three dollars a day for the first year and three dollars and a half for the second. He must then be able to earn four dollars a day and pay an initiation fee of from twenty-five to one hundred dollars according to the locality.

The 'Flint Glass Workers' allow only one apprentice to every twenty men unless there are less in a shop, and he must

serve four years. By adding an initiation fee of one hundred dollars in case of emigrants, and having other stringent shop rules, they keep up wages to from six to nine dollars a day for their members in this skilled trade during the ten months' work season. But these examples of a labor trust modeled after the increasing examples of the same among capitalists are the exception in the labor world.

Only seventeen of the forty-eight unions making returns as above stated, had any national rules restricting apprentices, and only fourteen of these unions, with 71,000 members, or fourteen per cent of the 500,000, in the forty-eight unions, reported any success in the enforcement of such rules. Of these 71,000, 9500 were glass-workers, 5417 were hat makers, 28,000 were iron moulders, and 20,000 were journeymen tailors; and these last allowed one apprentice to every journeyman, the apprenticeship lasting four to five years, a very liberal rule. In the census of 1885 in Massachusetts, it appeared that in the hat business there were 226 technically known as hatters and twenty-nine apprentices, but there were 875 other hat makers such as silk and fur hat makers, finishers, trimmers, pressers, etc., and only three apprentices, instead of fully three times that number, as the union rules allowed. Similarly, there were in Massachusetts only sixteen apprentices to 769 journeymen pattern makers, or one to forty-eight; fifty-eight apprentices to 2997 iron moulders, or one to fifty-two, and one apprentice to twenty-six wood carvers, and one apprentice to every twelve journeymen tailors. In this, as in nearly every case, we find that the death-blow to apprenticeship is not struck by the unions, but by the conditions of business which bring workers into a trade without any regular training or apprenticeship whatever.

As a final proof that the trade-unions are losing interest to a great degree in the restriction of apprentices, reference may be made to the small number of strikes for this purpose. In 1881-86, inclusive, according to the United States

Bureau for Labor Statistics there were 22,304 strikes and of these only 250, or one and one-tenth per cent, had any connection with apprentices. Sixty-three of these were unsuccessful. Of these 250 strikes, 157 were in the building trades, twenty in glass, fifteen in tobacco, twelve in clothing, nine in metals, seven in printing and publishing. Of the 9384 establishments on strike in New York, during 1885-89, as reported by the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1889, only 114, or one and two-tenths per cent were connected with apprenticeship, and of these 114 only seventeen per cent were either wholly or partly successful, though of all strikes, sixty-two per cent were wholly or partly successful. In 1891 and 1892 less than one per cent of the strikes or of the men involved were connected with disputes over apprenticeship rules.

Although the writer of the *Century* articles charges the trade-unions with the downfall of the apprenticeship system, the only system known until very recently for imparting trade instruction, he says in the June number, 1893: "At the Sixth Annual Convention of the Pennsylvania Association of Master House Painters and Decorators, held at Scranton in January last, one of the delegates read a paper on the apprenticeship system as observed in his trade. He said that after a personal investigation among at least 600 master painters and decorators of Philadelphia and vicinity, he had discovered that not an average of one in fifteen had a single apprentice in his business, and that the larger the workshop or establishment, the greater seemed the abhorrence with reference to the employment of boys to learn the trade, many of the masters going so far as to say that in all their experience as masters, extending over fifteen to thirty-five years and employing from fifteen to fifty and as high as eighty workmen, they had never bothered their brains teaching a boy the business."

I will further state that in the course of University Extension lectures before many thousands of persons, I have

urged everyone who knew of a single boy who had been prevented from learning his trade by trade restrictions, to kindly report the matter, orally or in writing, to me, and I have never thus or in any other way received personal knowledge of more than two cases, one of which was among the nail workers, and the other among glass workers although I believe there are a few hundred such among our 65,000,000 population. The downfall of the apprenticeship system is due largely to the introduction of machinery and the consequent subdivision of work in large shops. This renders it impracticable for the employer to take a personal interest in each of his men, or to give them an all-round training. It is more profitable to set the learner at work upon a single machine or branch of work where he will soon acquire speed. The boy prefers this because he is eager to begin earning as soon as possible. But the apprenticeship system as managed under modern conditions is at best a poor method of trade instruction. It is a picking-up process. Scores of wage-earners have assured me that very little actual teaching is done for the boy in the apprenticeship, but he must do a great deal of drudgery, run more or less danger of moral contamination, and can only learn what he may incidentally pick up by watching others. This is a great waste of time. There is no awakening of keen ambition and love of the work; no adequate training or imparting of dignity to the work. A journeyman is hardly ever paid, as he should be, when on piece work for the time lost in teaching an apprentice. This alone accounts for much of whatever opposition there may be among journeymen to a large number of apprentices.

In a forcible address before the Charities Congress of the World's Fair Auxiliary, Professor Felix Adler, of New York, held very truly that our institutions are based first, on democracy, and second, on universality of culture, and that this latter must come, not only in the pleasure and culture of school days and out of working hours, but that man

must get his greatest good in his work. But he cannot do so unless he is better trained to see and produce the beautiful and the skillful than is the ordinary apprentice. President Smart, of Purdue University, Indiana, who has been very successful in combining practical trade instruction with high school and more advanced work, presented at the annual convention of the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1888, the result of extensive inquiries as to the number of boys that had become successful workmen out of every hundred who had entered each trade mentioned. Of the carpenters, there were only eighteen; of the pattern makers, sixteen; of the blacksmiths, ten; of the moulders, seventeen; of the machinists, fourteen; or an average of fifteen to each one hundred. Evidently something must be done. What shall it be?

First should come far more of mental training through compulsory education from five to fifteen years of age, and ultimately five to sixteen. Next a thorough system of manual training properly taught by expert teachers should be a part of every school system from the kindergarten to the college. Such training develops, as experience in Toledo, Boston and scores of other cities is proving, manual skill and the development of the whole body and character. Its object has been well defined to be to add to the pupils' power of expression by verbal description the power of expression by delineation and construction. It tends to awaken a pleasure in honest work in the hard-handed as contrasted with the soft-handed occupations. It renders it possible for a boy to learn a trade more quickly after leaving school, and thus induces the parents to keep the child in school longer and thereby better equip him in other ways for life. It is beginning to be recognized that the worst enemies of workingmen are those who would confine public education, as some recent Chicago agitators would do, to "the three R's" that might fit the boy, as one of them urged to be "a clerk in O'Leary's grocery." If it be urged that the workingmen cannot afford to keep their children in

school more than three years, or that the public schools are not sufficiently equipped for better training, a sufficient reply is that the workingmen who have the votes, should demand such reform in taxation as will secure public revenue in proportion to ability to pay from the rich citizen as well as from the small house owner, and thereby properly equip our school and provide, where private charity may fail, such temporary aid to children at school as will guarantee to them a nearer approach than now to equality of opportunity with other social classes in the development of their manhood. Before a boy enters upon the duties of a trade or occupation, he should have such breadth of culture as will enable him to choose wisely and to be an intelligent citizen. One can never succeed thoroughly in any special occupation who has not a broad foundation, as the president of Heidelberg University recently said relative to professional training: "A specialist who is only a specialist is not a specialist at all."

Workingmen need great capacity for turning from one tool or machine to another in the same or a kindred occupation. W. T. Harris, Commissioner of Education in the United States, well put it when he said that, whereas formerly a man was obliged to spend seven years in learning a trade, he must now be able to learn a new one in seven weeks. Such are the vicissitudes of modern invention and industrial development. For all this, manual training is an excellent preparation. As Mr. Powderly said at the time of President Smart's address just quoted: "Every school-room should be a workshop, a laboratory, and an art gallery. At present, a trade learned is a trade lost, for the learner does not have an opportunity to practice more than one part of his calling, and if thrown out of that one groove cannot fall into another. Under an industrial system of training, every American youth will know sufficient of all trades to step into whatever opens itself to him, and he will not be forced by circumstances to stand in the way of

another who is anxious to rise, but will be fitted to take a step forward at a moment's notice. He will always find work to do and will do it more rapidly, with better tools, and with greater reward than the artisan of the present." Both Mr. Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor and Mr. George E. McNeill, of Boston, confirm my opinion that if any opposition by organized labor to public manual training schools ever existed, it has in most places yielded to hearty endorsement.

But something more is needed than manual training. This furnishes the foundation; but there should follow in some trades special trade instruction. The well-known authority upon education, Professor James Mac Alister, writes me: "I am strongly of the opinion that trade schools are needed to maintain the skilled crafts at a high standard of excellence, and that without them, labor, demanding intelligence and training, will deteriorate. Without them our productive industries and the men engaged in them cannot hold their own against the skilled labor of the most advanced European countries. We have not yet begun to realize the importance of technical education in the broadest sense of that term. The trade school is needed to bring the finer industries to perfection. It is clearly understood in Germany and France, and England is rapidly learning the lesson. Workmen in this country must learn to accept the schools in which their crafts are taught as the only means of raising the standard of their work and improving their economic and social condition. The same thing must be done for the skilled occupations of women. The courses in dressmaking and millinery in the Drexel Institute have this end in view."

It is well known that the superiority of France in works of taste and the rapid strides of Germany in dispossessioning England of some of her foreign markets are partly attributable to the fine technical and trade schools which France and Germany have supported, partly through public, partly through private means. So far as can be learned, the

trade-unions in these countries have co-operated with the movement. In Paris, as I am informed by the distinguished economist, Professor Levasseur, there are twenty trade-unions that are affiliated with evening trade schools for the better instruction of those who work as apprentices during the day. The reputation of Paris in millinery and dress-making is surely somewhat sustained by the eight fine schools for training girls in cutting, fitting and artistic designing. Belgium has also developed an excellent system of trade schools. For example, at Brussels there are trade schools in the building trades, tailoring, printing, watchmaking, etc.; at Liege, in iron mining, electrical work, etc.; at Ostend, in ship building and the fisheries; at Ghent and Verviers, in cotton weaving and dyeing. Most of these schools have night and even Sunday forenoon sessions for those that can best come then and week-day sessions for others. A large portion of the pupils are regular apprentices, and, what is most vital, they are thoroughly taught. There is no pretence, as in some American schools, to teach all of a trade in three evenings a week for six months. The evening school course for journeymen weavers at Enschede, Holland, is six school months each year for six years. In the United States Consular Report for October, 1893,* are interesting accounts of trade instruction in Europe. Our Consul at Rotterdam, Mr. William E. Gardner, thus writes: "Next to educators themselves, employers of skilled labor are the most pronounced advocates of trade schools, which do not cheapen, as these men testify, but only improve the grade of skilled labor, making it not merely profitable to the employer, but more marketable. The old adage that 'there is room at the top' is proved anew in the experience of the country thus far with its trade-school graduates. Strangely enough, as it will appear to Americans, there is not, on the part of journeymen mechanics, any serious protest against an increase of skilled

* Pp. 187-287.

workers, for two reasons: (1) There is not in the Netherlands, as in England and the United States, the compact labor organization to crystallize and make public any latent objection that may exist; and (2) the older shop-trained mechanic, from whom opposition would be naturally expected, is probably also the father of a boy or girl who is having the benefit of virtually free training in the local trade school. Thus is the disadvantage of the school in its relation to him as a mechanic quite offset by its advantage in its relation to him as a father; and, on the whole, he has no fault to find." In view of the favor shown to these trade schools by such labor organizations as do exist in Paris and elsewhere, it may be safely said that the second of the above two reasons is far more important than the first.

The recent report of the United States Labor Commissioner on Industrial Education is an invaluable presentation of the great work of European trade schools. Nowhere in all the report is there a hint of trade-union opposition. In Brussels the Typographical Union took the initiative in establishing a trade school. After five years' attendance, pupils successful in the examination receive a diploma entitling them to the wages of a skilled workman. The governing committee of the school is equally composed of workmen and employers.* A similar school was started in 1886 by the Printers' Union at Paris. All of the graduates, says the report,† have entered into positions found for them by this union. The report declares that the considerable effort of the past twenty-five years to raise the standard of trade education in France "has come from the side of labor organizations, industrial employers" and private and benevolent institutions.‡ The report also declares, in speaking of the Belgian trade schools:§ "The value of these institutions

* Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor of the United States, p. 192.

† Page 277.

‡ Page 277.

§ Page 199.

to the laboring classes can hardly be overestimated. They meet the needs of various kinds of wage-earners. Workingmen's children, who become bread-winners as soon as the factory laws allow, and even before, find in night study at the industrial schools the instruction which otherwise they would never have leisure to secure. Older men, moreover, discovering at the shop what they lack in efficiency, what hindrances bar their advancement, what influences must be counteracted, start in, even late in life, to supply the want by systematic training, which may be had absolutely without cost. Laborers fifty years old are not ashamed to seize such tardy opportunities, and numbers of workingmen assert that they were fathers of large families before the chance occurred to enter on this coveted instruction."

The nearest approach I have discovered in this country to the European method of trade instruction is in connection with instruction in plumbing at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn. "The Journeymen Plumbers' Association of Brooklyn," says the catalogue of 1893-94, "co-operates in the direction of these classes. At the end of a two years' course, a committee of the association examines the members in regard to both manual skill and knowledge of trade methods and awards certificates to those showing satisfactory proficiency, which certificates, in case of the holder afterward applying for admission to the association, are accepted in place of the examination of like character otherwise required. In the January number of the *Pratt Institute Monthly* appears this statement: "The evening trade classes of the department represent very forcibly the change of attitude which practical workmen are showing toward trade schools. Over eighty per cent of the total number in these classes are engaged during the day at practical work in the trades. Many of these are sons of mechanics of reputation and experience, while in many cases the student's presence is due to the older associates in the trade. The use of the evening trade classes in this manner has been encouraged by the Institute,

which holds that the natural work for these classes is to broaden and perfect the training of those already started in the trades, while the day classes afford the true opportunity for training beginners.”

In this connection the following letter from the head of trade instruction at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, will interest: “The attitude of the trade organizations toward the trade work of the Institute has been in general one of armed neutrality. With the exception of those trades involving the most ignorant labor, viz., plastering and bricklaying, we have never met with active opposition from trade organizations. In the cases above mentioned, the unions, on two occasions, threatened to take away our instructors, who were journeymen, but in each instance, the matter was amicably adjusted. Any opposition to the work of the school is, of course, felt in resistance to the employment of its graduates and this has varied greatly in the various trades. In plastering and bricklaying, this opposition has always been quite strong and compelled the graduate to commence work in some small place out of town and after a while to return to Brooklyn and join the union, which, under these circumstances, was easily done.

“In the plumbing class, most of our students have been apprentices before coming to the school, and with those who are not, it has been the practice to afterward obtain an opening as an apprentice and then, after a short time, take the examination which the rules of the Journeymen’s Association provide for and gain their standing as journeymen. The journeymen would, as a rule, I think, like to shut out these latter school-trained men, but they know that they are powerless to do so and largely in consequence of this they have come into a working co-operation with the Institute in the direction of the plumbing classes—the first time, as far as I am aware, that a journeymen’s organization has come into co-operation with trade-school movement.

“The members of the carpentry classes have had little difficulty. They have not brought forward their school training among the workmen, but they have, almost without exception, very quickly secured good openings at very favorable wages. I think there is very little prejudice among the carpentry trade against the trade schools. In machinery it is much the same. The students are obliged to start at smaller wages but their progress is rapid. They are liable to meet at first with prejudice from the workmen, but in no case have I known of active opposition. With printers I have not so much data because we deal almost entirely with apprentices and even with journeymen.”

Relative to the mechanical trade schools of the master builders of Philadelphia,* one of the managers wrote, me in the summer of 1893, as follows: “At the opening of the schools, three years since, the attitude of some of the principal trade associations was entirely hostile. They claimed that the Exchange established the schools to render their members independent of any agitation in regard to wages, by training for trades only such as they chose, and that the policy of refusing to admit the sons of journeymen would be adopted. Claiming also that it was intended to teach trades in less than the usual time, they stated emphatically that the shop was the only school, that no trade could be learned in less than four years, and that employers were themselves responsible for keeping American boys out of trades. None of these statements had any foundation in fact, but their influence was such that, outside the membership of the Exchange, it was almost impossible for our graduates to obtain entrance into trades, and the attendance on some trades during the second term was reduced more than one-half.

“The Exchange would be glad to work in harmony with the various associations for the general improvement of both apprentices and journeymen. But where rules exist to

* For a good account of this school and of apprenticeship generally in the building trades, see *Journal of Political Economy*, June, 1894, article by Geo. C. Sikes.

interfere with proposed work it cannot take the initiative in proposing to modify them. This has, however, been done voluntarily by one of the principal associations, the bricklayers, and after a conference the points conceded were that preference would be given to graduates from the schools, and in consequence of their holding certificates their term of apprenticeship would be shortened one year. Other trades have not shown the same foresight and still retain rules which might be modified if the objects sought were fully explained, as they might be in a conference of committees.

“There can be no doubt of either the value or the practicability of trade instruction, avoiding, however, the attempt to teach too much in a short time. Up to the present time the schools are limited to the instruction of apprentices. For them, under the changed condition of apprenticeship, there is only the opportunity to learn from observation. Only in exceptional cases are journeymen willing to teach them, and there is consequently no regular system of instruction, the rules of the associations simply stating that apprentices shall be afforded every opportunity of acquiring their trades. That this is unsatisfactory is shown by the number of young men, already apprentices, who fill whatever vacancies remain in the classes, and applications received from journeymen of several years' experience who recognize the fact that 'picking up' a trade leaves them the inferiors of younger men who have acquired both method and manual skill.” Others of the managers more emphatically testify their conviction of the growing friendliness to the school of the Philadelphia trade-unions.

Mr. P. J. McGuire, general secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and a resident of Philadelphia, thus writes relative to the Philadelphia and New York schools: “While there has been no official hostility on the part of labor organizations toward the Mechanical Trade School of the Philadelphia Builders' Exchange, still there is an undercurrent of ill-feeling against

it. The members of labor organizations had the impression that the management of such a trade school under the auspices of the Builders' Exchange was undertaken purely out of hostility to the trade-unions and with a view to their injury. Quite an influential element of these organizations, nevertheless, is of the opinion that mechanical trade schools are merely primary and elementary and largely theoretical; hence, they cannot materially injure labor organizations nor bring the graduates of these schools into very active competition with mechanics trained under a practical apprenticeship system.

After the pupil leaves the trade school and goes out on a building, he has to practically apply the knowledge he has acquired in the trade school and sometimes has to unlearn much of that which he has been taught. Had these mechanical trade schools been undertaken by the State or municipality, there would not be such manifest opposition to them on the part of organized labor. The late Colonel Auchmuty's efforts were combatted by the trade unions, because he went to the employers and contractors for co-operation and encouragement and solicited their endorsement on the special plea that graduates from these trade schools could work cheaper and be free from the control of the trade-unions. He went out of his way to charge that the trade-unions were managed and run by foreigners and that American boys were excluded from learning trades by the efforts of foreign trade-unionists. These ill-advised remarks on his part created a sturdy prejudice among organized workmen against Colonel Auchmuty.

"The allegations in a recent issue of the *Century* are untrue generally. There is no restriction in our organization nor in the bulk of trade-unions to keep the American boy graduates from the trade school from joining a trade-union or working beside a trade-union man. There are very few trades now which have apprentice 'rules to exclude the American boy from learning a trade as an apprentice in

favor of badly trained foreigners who are daily admitted to the unions.' ”

Apropos of Mr. McGuire's suggestion of public technical schools to supplement manual training schools, it may be stated that in Europe many of the trade schools were started by private aid, but by far the larger part are now managed or supervised by the State, while the entering wedge to a similar development in this country has already been driven in the support by taxation of our State agricultural colleges, which teach not only the trade of farming but also in many cases, engineering and some of the mechanic arts. In Chicago and very likely in a few other cities many apprentices among stone cutters and other trades requiring drawing take lessons in a Turner hall from nine to twelve Sunday mornings, but the expense and distance from home if not religious scruples keep away many. There is great need of public technical instruction.

Mr. M. H. Madden, president of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, previously quoted, expresses the opinion of many American trade-unionists when he writes: “ You ask, do the Illinois trade-unions refuse to admit to membership any graduates of a good trade school, like Purdue, or would the unions refuse to admit, if such a person should apply for membership. The answer to this would depend somewhat upon circumstances and somewhat upon the trade involved. In many trades the question would be one of competency only, which would be ascertained by examination or example of work. In other trades, such as engineering, the trade insists on recruits coming along the line of gradual promotion. This makes the journeyman out of the stoker apprentice. Hence, trade schools or manual training institutions might not be recognized as furnishing the field for this sort of a plant.”

Very significant in relation to the attitude of our unions toward both to trade instruction and immigrant labor were the resolutions passed in the November, 1893, convention of

the Illinois Federation of Labor, on motion of a delegate from the Painters' District Council of Chicago:

"WHEREAS, owing to the defective apprenticeship system of this country the standard of skill of the American mechanic is not what it should be in trades where active ability is required, and

"Whereas, in all industries throughout this great land aliens perform the most skillful part of the work, and

"Whereas, drawing and designing are the fundamental principles of all trades of handicraft, be it

"Resolved, that this convention advocate the perfecting of an apprentice law that will protect the apprentice and tend to raise the standard of skill of the American workmen up to that degree now enjoyed by our brothers across the sea ; and to this end be it

"Resolved, that we demand of the public schools throughout the State the establishment of classes in night schools, whereby those who work during the day at their various trades can obtain instruction in the art of free-hand, ornamental and mechanical drawing."

The fears of many trade-unionists with regard to trade schools are forcibly stated in a letter from Mr. Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor. He holds that the Baron de Hirsch Trade School, as well as the other trade schools in New York City, are only working great injury to the American wage-worker. Mr. Gompers writes: "It is not only ridiculous but positively wrong for trade schools to continue in their turning out 'botch' workmen who are ready and willing, at the end of their so-called 'graduation,' to take the places of American workmen far below the wages prevailing in the trade. With practically half of the toiling masses of our country unemployed, the continuance of the practice is tantamount to a crime."

The nub of the difficulty is evidently that which was presented in the report for 1886 of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, by the secretary of one of the trade-unions: "I believe in all journeymen and apprentices being connected with the unions. If a boy become a full-fledged mechanic in a technical school, he would not know anything about unions, nor would he have any sympathy with their rules and regulations."

Cannot this difficulty be obviated in public-supported trade schools, or in schools affiliated with trade-unions possibly in some such way as in Paris, Belgium, or in the Pratt Institute schools hitherto mentioned, where the pupil in the trade school afterward becomes an apprentice for a short time, or is an apprentice even during his trade life? In fact, may not the present few American trade schools be animated by a more friendly spirit toward organized labor and be deserving of more kindly consideration in return than is assumed by some trade-unions?

Says the New York *Herald* of May 28, relative to the Hebrew Trade School just mentioned, in an article endorsed by the managers of the School:

"In this city there exists a trade school whose policy is directly in accord with organized labor, and that is the Baron de Hirsch Trade School, at No. 225 East Ninth street. This school has been in operation for nearly a year and is one of the works founded by means of the fund contributed by Baron de Hirsch for the amelioration of the condition of Russian Jewish immigrants.

"The management of this school deserves the hearty support of every trade-unionist in the city. It does a good and necessary work for the Russian immigrants without interfering in any way with established standard of wages or hours, simply by adopting the aims and methods of organized labor. Every pupil is strongly urged to join the union of his trade immediately upon graduating, and not content with this passive indorsement of trade-unions, the managers have instituted a Saturday evening course of lectures upon social, political and industrial questions, which includes lectures upon the objects and methods of labor organizations."

The manager of these Baron de Hirsch trade schools thus writes me:

"My impression is, that the labor leaders who reflect upon the trade school problem are much more friendly now than

they were formerly; they are beginning to see that trade schools are a fixture in this country and that it is the part of wisdom for them to take trade schools graduates into their organizations as friends, instead of leaving them on the outskirts as enemies. Their hostility should be directed not to trade schools, but, if anywhere, to unrestricted immigration. The few men graduated by the trade schools are as 'a mere drop of water in a bucket' as compared to the thousands of mechanics from Europe, who pour into this country annually; how wrong, therefore, for American mechanics to shut off from their own children the advantages of a trade school in the face of this unrestricted immigration.

"There is no doubt in my mind about the practicability of trade school instruction; I can point out a graduate of these schools from the Carpentry Department who knew nothing about carpentry when he came here, about eight months ago; to-day he is earning about twelve dollars per week in an establishment where first-class joinery work only is done. So there are numerous examples in our different departments. We are mere beginners. We do not pretend to 'turn out' finished mechanics in six months or a year, any more than a law college 'turns out' lawyers in two years, or a medical college 'turns out' doctors in the same time; it takes years of hard work and study to make a mechanic, or a lawyer, or doctor—after they leave their schools of instruction.

"The talk of our one hundred annual graduates undermining American workmen by working for wages below that generally prevailing in trade is a mistake, a radical error, founded on ignorance; these few men are being absorbed in this country far more easily than moisture by the driest sponge. I find our graduates insist on getting good wages; and they generally succeed in getting them in time, provided they have been taught a trade which is adapted to their physical and mental attainments; some men are adapted for one thing and some for another; thus, it is an error to

have a small boy taught carpentry, for, a carpenter should be a strong man, capable of handling a heavy plank.

“ Again, it is still a question in my mind as to what trades are best adapted for trade-school instruction; I am satisfied that carpentry, wood-turning, cabinet work, carving, plumbing, house and sign painting are so adapted; doubtless, also brickwork, masonry, stone cutting and blacksmithing are likewise so, though our schools have not yet adopted the same for lack of room. I am thoroughly convinced that labor organizations have nothing to fear from trade schools and their products; of a hundred men who enter our trade schools, we do not graduate ten; the remainder become tired of the work which we make them do; the result is that the other ninety per cent who leave us enter some common labor pursuit where they are apt to cut down wages of labor, whereas, had they remained in our schools, we would have made independent mechanics of them, who would be amongst the first to uphold the scale of wages.”

The Auchmuty School in New York has in twelve years sent out over 4000 more or less trained mechanics, and just before the recent death of its founder received \$500,000 endowment from Pierrepont Morgan. The prospectus declares three months to be sufficient in the day classes to graduate young men who in the school become “ possessed of the skill,” though not, it is elsewhere admitted, of the speed “ of the average journeyman and have a wider knowledge of the trade in all its branches.” Colonel Auchmuty wrote in the *Century* of January, 1889: “ Living is made dearer, the poor are made poorer by union rules. In nearly all callings where skilled labor is required, it can safely be asserted that a journeyman receiving four dollars a day and working with a trade-school graduate at two dollars a day could produce as much as two journeymen now do for eight dollars—a saving in cost of two dollars, or twenty-five per cent.”

No wonder that any such effort to benefit the employer or the consumer at the expense of wages was opposed by the

trade-unionist. It is sound economic policy for the worker to prefer high wages to sharing as part consumer of his products in the cheapness that might result from lower wages.

But, as hitherto suggested, organized labor might possibly arrange with the Auchmuty, as has already been done to some degree with other schools, as just shown in Boston, Brooklyn and Philadelphia, to examine the graduates of the school and to apprentice them, with such shortening of the time of apprenticeship as the work done in the school would justify. In this way, too, the trade-school graduate would be brought into a knowledge of labor organizations, with the same prospect of becoming a member on completing his apprenticeship as is true of the ordinary apprentice. From the letter of the secretary of the National Trades Building Association quoted below, it would appear that already in some trades an amicable agreement between the Auchmuty School and some trade-unions has been secured.

The trade-unionist who believes in apprenticeship but fears the trade school should notice that the former is also a kind of school wherein the journeyman more or less imperfectly teaches the trade to his helper, and that the trade school, put on the basis urged in this paper, can here, as already abroad, help rather than hurt the apprenticeship system and make it again a strong factor in human progress. Many employers of labor and those interested in endowing or managing private trade schools, to say nothing of those to be founded, I trust, by the State and by organized labor, might here as in Europe, be glad to co-operate in this use of the trade school to more thoroughly train the regular apprentice, whether of American or foreign birth. Mr. Gompers, whose severe words upon New York trade schools were just quoted, has, since hearing of the nature of the European trade schools, expressed to the writer his hearty indorsement of the idea, stating that he and his fellow American trade-unionists hold that no skill or knowledge is too great to be desired by the members of our organizations.

The Plumbers' Union of Boston refused to let one of their members teach in a plumbing school. But the Mason Builders' Association and the Bricklayers' Unions of Boston and vicinity have taken a great step forward in solving this matter of trade instruction by placing the supervision of apprenticeship in the hands of a joint committee of the above organizations of employers and employed. The apprentice when taken must be between sixteen and twenty-one years of age and be able to read and write the English language. He must serve three years and until twenty-one. The employer must give "legitimate instruction" during the entire time. The joint committee relieves the employer of an unfaithful apprentice and takes away a good apprentice from an unfaithful employer, and adjusts all differences and sees to it that the apprentice receives his pay and that he has properly completed his apprenticeship. Without a certificate in this last point from the joint committee, the worker cannot join the Bricklayers' Union, membership in which seems to be necessary for employes of the Builders' Association.

The admirable agreement closes with the following provision, though no such trades school as is there mentioned appears to be as yet in operation in Boston: "Recognizing the fact that special instruction in the fundamental features of the bricklaying trade (which instruction shall comprehend education of both mind and hand, so that the individual shall gain a proper knowledge and strength of materials, and of the science of construction) is of as much importance as special instruction in other trades or professions, and, realizing that the chances of an apprentice to get as much instruction as he is entitled to, while at work on buildings, are necessarily limited, the parties to these rules agree that they will join in an effort to establish an institution in this city where all the trades shall be systematically taught; that when such school is established they will unite in the oversight and care of the same and will modify these rules so that

a reasonable deduction shall be made from the term of an apprentice by virtue of the advantage gained through instruction in said school."

The secretary of the National Association of Builders, thus writes me from his office, 166 Devonshire street, Boston: "Some difficulty was experienced in securing the co-operation promised by the union, which was caused by the fear of the workmen that employers would avail themselves of the services of apprentices at a less rate of wages than is paid to journeymen, which action would have operated to the detriment of the latter. All opposition to trade instruction ceased, however, upon the adoption of the enclosed agreement [just quoted]. The experience of the Master Builders' Exchange of Philadelphia has proved that when the purpose of trade instruction as advocated by this association has been understood, opposition on the part of the unions has changed to co-operation. The Bricklayers' Union, the most powerful organization of workmen in that city, is actively assisting the effort of the Master Builders in the trade school work; and other unions have followed their example. The earnest efforts of the late Colonel R. T. Auchmuty, of the New York trade schools, had practically overcome the opposition by the unions of New York City to trade training [not quite true, we have seen, so far as concerns the Auchmuty School], and at present, a number of the classes have committees of inspection appointed from the unions of the respective trades. There is a small school in existence in Rochester, under the supervision of the Builders' Exchange, which is favored by the workmen, and many similar institutions are projected by the filial bodies of this association."

If trade schools were general, covering most of the common trades, their influence upon wages would be beneficial, for increased skill would mean increased capacity to earn high wages, which after being earned, labor organizations might be trusted to secure for their members.

Again, with the increased artistic training of the workmen would come an increased demand for the production of products to satisfy those wants and there would also come the demand for wages with which to buy them. This would mean a higher standard of comfort and of wages. The experience of the best institutions that have tried to teach trades in Europe, shows that a trade may be learned somewhat quicker as well as far better at a trade school, followed or accompanied by a year of practical work. This would leave the apprentice or learner free to remain longer by at least two years in the public schools. Anything that will allow of our youth remaining in schools where the manual and mental are properly co-ordinated, until the child is sixteen or seventeen, ought to be welcomed by every wage-earner as a means of first giving such person that wider culture which is one of the greatest goals of modern democracy, and, second, of raising the ambition and intelligence which shall lead to a higher standard of living and to a wise use of such agencies as organization and State activity. When asked if trade schools would not increase competition with workmen who are now already in the field, President Smart, in the address already referred to, thus replied: "Is it possible that there is a man in this country who is afraid of the competition of his own child? If there is such a one, I think I can give him a good answer. My answer is this: The meanest form of competition which a good workman has to contend with is the competition which comes from a man who has spent little or no time in learning his business, and who therefore produces an inferior job of work at a lower price. This is the only form of competition which a good workman need fear. If a man does as good a job as you do, he will charge a fair price for it." I fully believe, with Professor MacAlister, that the trade schools have to come and that trade-unions can so shape the movement as to get benefit rather than harm from it, and that they need have no more fear that an increase in the number of workers will reduce the wages for skill than

have teachers and lawyers that an increase in their number will reduce their fees, or than the capitalist has that the increase in the amount of wealth, though it lower the rate of interest on the dollar, will lower the profit of the capitalist. With an increase of trade skill, a unit of skill may conceivably get less pay than now, though that is by no means certain, in view of the greater demand for products which the more highly trained classes of wage-earners will have. The increased demand for products would of course mean an increased demand for labor to produce them. But even if we admit that trade schools would slightly lessen the reward of the unit of skill, as the increase of wealth lessens the rate of interest, yet there will be so much greater amount of skill in society as a whole that the wage-worker, like the capitalist, will find his earnings greater than when skill was less extensive and diffused. In other words, his condition, even at the worst, is likely to be analogous to that of capitalist who formerly could earn ten per cent on his one thousand dollars and now earns say, six per cent, but has, say, three thousand dollars invested, so that his total earnings would now be eighteen hundred, where they were formerly only one thousand dollars. Organized labor should treat this question in a broad and liberal spirit, bearing in mind that in the long run trade exclusiveness and selfishness will not be as wise as a broad sympathy that should not only include those more fairly skilled, but the vastly greater mass of comparatively unskilled because untaught humanity all about us.

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